

# REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

April 24 - May 1, 2024

## WEEKLY EVENTS

- On May 2-3, 2024, the Office of International Cooperation, Department of Disease Control, conducted a rapid community assessment to identify barriers to accessing routine vaccinations among ethnic minority children in Na Noi District, Nan Province. They collaborated with community leaders, teachers, and relevant officials in the area. During the meeting, they gathered and proposed solutions to address low vaccination coverage as follows:
  - Provide training sessions to community leaders, teachers, and officials on the importance of essential vaccinations for children, post-vaccination care to alleviate parental anxiety, and addressing issues of parents forgetting vaccination appointments by increasing frequency of announcements via multimedia platforms. This aims to increase awareness about basic vaccinations and prompt parents to bring their children for scheduled vaccinations.
  - Develop various media formats to enhance convenient, rapid, and accessible communication, such as individualized notifications via communication tools, aligning with the diverse and multi-channel communication landscape of the present era.
- On May 1, 2024, a fire occurred at a chemical storage warehouse in Phachi District, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province, affecting a large number of people. Phachi Hospital was unable to provide services due to elevated chemical levels in the atmosphere. Consequently, a field hospital was established at Wat Khok Muang, Phachi District, equipped with medical supplies and staff. Additionally, a team of personnel from the Provincial Health Office of Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya was dispatched to oversee and monitor the health impact on the community in the surrounding areas.

## STREPTOCOCCUS SUIS: SILENT DANGER BUT BEWARE!!!

Information from the Week 17 Surveillance Report (April 22-28, 2024) of Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health, reported six deaths due to *Streptococcus suis* across several provinces. The cases are not part of a related cluster; most victims were elderly with underlying health conditions. Risk factors included consuming raw or undercooked pork and handling raw pork during food preparation. From January 1 to April 29, 2024, there were 235 *Streptococcus suis* cases, predominantly affecting the elderly and working-age populations, with the highest incidence in the Northeastern and Northern regions. Sixty percent of fatalities had underlying conditions such as hypertension, hyperlipidemia, diabetes, and heart disease. *Streptococcus suis* is a zoonotic infectious agent transmitted through undercooked or contaminated pork, and direct contact with infected pigs, particularly among farm workers. The incubation period is 3-5 days, with symptoms including fever, muscle pain, headache, nausea, diarrhea, altered mental state, encephalitis, stiffness, decreased hearing, ear ringing, seizures, and joint pain. Severe complications include deafness following encephalitis due to inflammation spreading from brain membranes to inner ear structures responsible for hearing. Prevention is crucial, especially for the elderly and those with underlying conditions, to mitigate the risk of fatal outcomes.



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Public Health and Livestock officers should work together to inform residents about the dangers of *Streptococcus suis*, how to protect themselves, and recognize early symptoms. They should prioritize at-risk groups such as regular consumers of raw or undercooked food and individuals involved in pig farming or pork handling. It is advised not to purchase pork from unknown sources. Those involved in pig farming or pork trade should wear masks, gloves, and goggles to prevent disease transmission. After working they should bathe to cleanse their bodies thoroughly. Prior to various important festivals when communal meals are shared, relevant officials should distribute pamphlets to households and engage in informal conversations to warn residents to avoid risky consumption behaviors. If symptoms appear, seek medical attention promptly and provide detailed risk history for accurate and swift treatment to reduce the risk of deafness and death from *Streptococcus suis* infection complications.

## INFORMATION COLLECTED AND ANALYZED BY

Multisectoral Capacity Development Program for Public Health Emergency Detection and Response in Border Areas

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## Sources

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- <https://www.siphospital.com/th/news/article/share/streptococcus-suis>
- <https://www.hfocus.org/content/2024/05/30405>
- Information courtesy of: The Streptococcus suis disease situation of in pigs and humans, and prevention and control guidelines. Compiled by Dr. Soawapak Hinjoy, Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health.
- Information courtesy of: Development group of international cooperation, Office of International Cooperation, Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health.
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